

Westlake Avenue North Parking Management Plan

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

4:00 PM to 7:30 PM

South Lake Union Armory Great Hall

Meeting Summary

Open House and Information Tables:

The Open House began at 4:00 p.m., with attendees signing in and having the opportunity to visit information tables on a variety of subjects relating to the Westlake Avenue North Parking Management Plan. Staffed tables included:

- Technology and Enforcement
- Residential Parking
- Non-Residential Parking
- Transportation Alternatives
- Westlake Avenue North Parking Workgroup

Presentations:

At 4:30 p.m. and again at 6:15 p.m. the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the Workgroup presented a discussion of the plan development process, plan details, implementation schedule and the continuing community role in plan changes.

- Wayne Wentz, SDOT City Traffic Engineer, welcomed meeting attendees and introduced the Workgroup. He commended the Workgroup members on their dedication, persistence and passion and their ability to bring closure to such a complicated issue as Westlake Avenue North parking. Wentz noted that the final proposed plan presented is not at all the same plan that SDOT presented to the community a year ago, and it was not the Workgroup's initial plan. It instead represents a true collaboration between SDOT and the Workgroup as representatives of the greater community.
- Marty Curry, Curry Consulting, described the process that the Workgroup and SDOT followed to arrive at the final plan. Curry was hired by SDOT to be a facilitator to the development of the Parking Management Plan. She began the process by interviewing key community members to gain an insight of their needs, followed by facilitating a series of three stakeholder meetings to which the community at large was invited. From those meetings the Workgroup members were selected to represent the variety of community stakeholders and collaborate with SDOT on developing the final plan. Curry commended the Workgroup for all their hard work and homework in tirelessly representing the diversity of the unique marine community.

- Cam Strong, Workgroup Member, speaking on behalf of the Workgroup, presented slides and discussed the process—including 12 formal Workgroup meetings—of developing the plan. The first several meetings consisted of gathering data on a variety of issues including parking enforcement, current and future land use, and transportation alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles. The Workgroup then developed their own survey form that they distributed throughout the community to glean more information on actual parking needs, usage patterns, and numbers of users. Strong discussed the survey results and the needs of the various parking users including businesses, their customers and employees, recreational boaters, and residents.

Strong stressed that the key concept that guided the Workgroup's efforts is the recognition that the Lake Union shoreline is an interdependent, freshwater marine environment. All the Workgroup's recommendations strove to protect the vibrancy and economic viability of the Westlake Avenue North community as an important resource. He also noted the Workgroup's insistence that the final plan and any subsequent changes be community-centric with the community as a whole involved in any parking-related decisions.

- Mike Estey, SDOT Parking Operations and Traffic Permits Manager, presented a brief summary of the Parking Management Plan, the details of which were available as a handout at the Open House, and are attached to this summary. The plan calls for free, unrestricted parking in approximately 2/3 of the spaces, with paid parking only on the east side of the south and central zones (Aloha Street to McGraw Street.). The plan calls for paid parking to be restricted to two hours' maximum stay in order to create turnover for the corridor's business customers and clients. Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) permits will be issued to qualified residential applicants on both the east and west sides of Westlake Avenue North. The permits allow free parking in any parking space throughout the Westlake corridor for up to 72 hours.

Estey stated that from a parking management perspective, SDOT wants to ensure that people have access to businesses, homes, and other places they want to go in the corridor. SDOT will collect parking data on a regular basis to monitor the effectiveness of the plan, and will communicate with the Workgroup and community the data results. If data shows parking occupancy higher than 90% for more than a few hours per day, SDOT will communicate back with the Workgroup and community to discuss whether there need to be changes made. Estey confirmed SDOT's agreement with taking a community-centric perspective with respect to any parking changes.

Questions and Comments:

After each of the presentations, Mike Estey and the Workgroup members took comments and answered questions from the attendees. Among them (with a brief summary of the response given at the meeting):

- What do you mean by “unrestricted” spaces? *“Unrestricted” means the spaces are free and have no time restrictions except the 72-hour maximum stay rule.*
- In your efforts to encourage employees to use alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles, what role has Metro played? *One of the tables at this Open House is staffed by a Metro representative who would be happy to discuss alternative transportation, including buses, carpooling, vanpooling, and Flex Car. Metro also maintains a web site with information on ride-sharing. Metro acknowledges that bus service to Westlake Avenue North is limited, but does not have resources to increase it at this time.*
- Will this plan discourage people who use the lot as a park-and-ride? *The use is not illegal. This is a public right-of-way and everyone has equal access to it. The Workgroup considered installing some 4-hour limited parking on the west side, but that would eliminate employee parking, which the Workgroup determined was a greater priority.*
- Does this plan represent a net increase or decrease in the number of controlled spaces? *There are currently 165 controlled spaces and the plan proposes about 450, so it is a net increase.*
- Has SDOT considered issuing a different RPZ permit for employees? *The suggestion has come up many times but unfortunately it is illegal.*
- When you are on an extended sailing trip, can you leave your vehicle in an unrestricted space for longer than 72 hours? *No, the 72-hour rule applies throughout the city, and defines the maximum time a vehicle may be parked on a block. It also applies to residents with RPZ permits. Longer-term parking is available at several private parking garages along the corridor.*
- The plan does not seem to address parking for employees that need to go in and out during the day. *In-and-out employees have the option of using the unrestricted spaces or the paid spaces, depending on the time and frequency of travel.*
- I don’t understand fully why parking management is needed. What are the primary problems that you are addressing? *We collected parking data in 2005 that showed that the southern two-thirds of the corridor were at 95% to 100% occupied during a significant portion of the weekday. When parking is that full, it is difficult for people to dependably get access to businesses and it is SDOT’s charge to manage parking to assure accessibility for all.*
- I might be in the minority to say I don’t believe the City owes me free parking, but I believe the number of 2-hour spaces is too high and very inefficient. I would much rather see the entire corridor turned into paid parking, optional all-day.
- I am from Kenmore Air. A lot of our customers take multi-day trips, and we make sure they understand there is a 72-hour limit. My concern is that the unrestricted parking will fill up first, even with short-term users. I would prefer paid parking that includes a provision for multi-day parking.
- I am from Argosy Cruises and would like SDOT to consider changing some or all of the two-hour stalls to three-hours. Argosy operates a two-hour cruise, so two-hour limits won’t work for our customers.

- I work on my boat a lot, often for more than two hours at a time. I would like the two-hour time limit raised to three or four hours.
- We live in a single-family home on a side street west of Westlake Avenue North and have no off street parking. We are worried about spillover parking from Westlake onto our street. *If the community perceives impacts from Westlake Avenue North parking spilling over into other areas, SDOT would consider expanding the RPZ as occurs with other RPZ's throughout the city.*
- Some people from our marina are from Nevada and have a boat here. Can they get an RPZ permit for their out-of-state car to use for the three months they're here? *Vehicle registration in Washington State is required for RPZ permits, and proof of residence is required.*
- I work in the unrestricted area in the north end. Have you thought about overflow? *The Workgroup considered overflow at length, and decided to leave parking free in the north end and see what happens. That way, if paid parking is eventually installed it will be based on facts and data rather than conjecture.*

Attachments:

Westlake Avenue North Parking Management Plan

Westlake Avenue North Parking Management Plan PowerPoint presentation

Frequently Asked Questions

Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) Permits handout